

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-02 SS-15 NSC-05

H-02 /057 W

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R 301853Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6278

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 02647

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: WEEKEND ITC'S

1. WORLD AIRWAYS REP HAS INQUIRED WHETHER EMBASSY HAD ANY IDEA ON WHEN CAB MIGHT RULE ON WORLD AIRWAY'S APPLICATION FOR WAIVER TO OPERATE FRENCH-ORIGIN WEEKEND ITC'S TO US UNDER SGAC RULE. WE REPLIED THAT WE DID NOT KNOW APPLICATION WAS STILL PENDING AND WE SUGGESTED THAT WORLD AIRWAY'S WASHINGTON LAWYERS ADDRESS QUERY DIRECTLY TO CAB. (COMMENT: WORLD AIRWAYS IS APPARENTLY BEING PRESSED BY FRENCH TRAVEL AGENCY WHICH STILL HOPES IT WILL BE ABLE OPERATE WEEKEND ITC'S TO US LATER THIS YEAR. NOTWITHSTANDING ABOVE SUGGESTION FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH CAB, WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THERE IS ANYTHING EMBASSY COULD BE AUTHORIZED TELL WORLD AIRWAYS REP HERE AND THAT USTS COULD ALSO CONVEY TO TRAVEL AGENCY WHICH IS ONE OF LARGER FRENCH AGENCIES WORKING CLOSELY WITH USTS.)

2. THERE HAS THUS FAR BEEN NO REACTION WHATEVER HERE FROM FRENCH SIDE IN RESPONSE OUR LETTER OF LAST OCTOBER (PARIS 23452) SETTING FORTH USG POSITION ON WEEKEND ITC'S AND PART CHARTERS. ESPEROU OF SGAC TOLD US RECENTLY THAT THIS WAS QUESTION ON WHICH ABRAHAM, NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF AIR TRANSPORT AT SGAC, UNCLASSIFIED

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WOULD BE ASKED BY STAFF TO FOCUS ON SHORTLY.

3. WE NOTE THAT IN PENDING CAB RULEMAKING ON ONE-STOP ITC'S AS WELL AS IN DRAFT LEGISLATION ON ITC'S WHICH AVIATION DAILY REPORTS SEN. CANNON PLANS INTRODUCE, THREE DAY ITC THAT WOULD BE AKIN TO SGAC'S WEEKEND ITC WOULD BE PERMITTED DOMESTICALLY BUT BE PROHIBITED FOR NORTH ATLANTIC TRAFFIC. WE PRESUME THAT MAIN REASON IS FEAR OF TRAFFIC DIVERSION FROM SCHEDULED TO NON-SCHEDULED CARRIERS THROUGH POSSIBLE ABUSE OF ITC PROVISIONS. WE ARE AWARE OF COMPLEXITY AND CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THIS QUESTION BACK HOME AND SO ARE NOT ABOUT TO INJECT ANY GRATUITOUS RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR OWN. HOWEVER, IN ORDER THAT INTERESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES MAY BETTER APPRECIATE REASONS FOR CONTINUING INTEREST IN WEEKEND ITC'S IN THE FRENCH TRAVEL MARKET, FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MAY BE USEFUL.

4. USTS AND TRAVEL AGENCIES WITH WHICH IT OPERATES FORESEE POSSIBLE MARKET OF UP TO 16,000 FRENCH WEEKEND ITC TRAVELERS TO US IN ONE YEAR IF PROGRAM COULD BE AUTHORIZED. OVER 10,000 FRENCH TRAVELERS VISITED US ON WEEKEND ITC'S IN 1973 WHEN THESE COULD BE OPERATED AS AFFINITY FLIGHTS BEFORE GOF ABOLISHED FRENCH-ORIGIN AFFINITY RULE, AND THIS WAS WITHOUT BENEFIT OF EXTENSIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN. (1973 FLIGHTS WERE ALMOST ALL LINKED TO LONG WEEKENDS OVER A HOLIDAY AND INVOLVED DEPARTURE PARIS THURSDAY NOON AND RETURN MONDAY MORNING.) REASONS FOR THIS FAIRLY LARGE FRENCH-ORIGIN MARKET, ACCORDING USTS, IS THAT

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6279

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FRENCH TRADITIONALLY ARE PREPARED TO FORK OUT SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS FOR THIS KIND OF "WEEKEND" TRAVEL OVER LONG DISTANCE AT ATTRACTIVE RATES ESPECIALLY OVER HOLIDAY WEEKENDS, AND THERE IS GREAT CURIOSITY ABOUT US AMONG FRENCH PUBLIC THAT HAS NEVER VISITED US AND WOULD LIKE TO GO THERE ON A QUICKIE TRIP FOR THE FIRST TIME AS A SAMPLER. IN THE PAST US HAS ALSO BEEN A PRIME MARKET FOR WEEKEND CHARTERS AS PART OF SALES INCENTIVE PROGRAMS BY FRENCH COMPANIES. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, WEEKEND ITC MARKET IS MOSTLY NEW TRAFFIC, AND ON BASIS OF INITIAL PLANNING MOST OF THE CHARTERS WOULD HAVE GONE TO US SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED CARRIERS.

5. CANCELLATION OF WEEKEND ITC'S TO THE US BY SEVERAL TRAVEL AGENCIES HAS RESULTED IN INCREASE IN WEEKEND TRIPS TO OTHER DESTINATIONS, ESPECIALLY EASTERN EUROPE, USTS TELLS US. WE QUESTION WHETHER A COMPARABLE MARKET WOULD EXIST IN THE US FOR WEEKEND TRAVEL TO PARIS, THOUGH THIS ALONE MIGHT NOT CONSTITUTE SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR ENVISAGING WAIVER PERMITTING OPERATION OF FRENCH-ORIGIN WEEKEND ITC'S TO US UNDER SGAC RULE. RUSH.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, SUPPLEMENTAL AIRLINES, AIR ROUTE APPLICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS02647
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750035-0138
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975016/aaaaafjc.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 NOV 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <31 DEC 2003 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: WEEKEND ITC'S
TAGS: EAIR, FR, WORLD AIRWAYS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006